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ABSTRACT

This report, submitted to the president of the College Entrance Examination Board, recommends ways the organization could both involve students in its ongoing affairs and become more responsive to the needs and concerns of the students who use, pay for, and are affected by the College Board's programs and services. Recommendations are made concerning: the disposition of report findings and recommendations; policies and practices regarding disclosure; programs and services of the College Board; inclusion of student and parent representatives in committee and governing bodies of the College Board; membership of student and parent organizations; involvement of student and parent groups in the organization's forum functions; the establishment of an office of student affairs; and communication channels between the College Board and student and parent organizations.

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Report on Student Involvement in the College Board

Kathleen Brouder
Planning Officer, Student Affairs

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College Entrance Examination Board, New York, 1978

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Foreword

This report is transmitted to the membership of the College Board as a message of concern for the place of students in the associational and organizational affairs of the Board. Kathleen Brouder, the author, was selected as a nominee of the Student Committee of the College Scholarship Service (CSS) and was invited by me to undertake the year-long task of examining the Board in all its parts and recommending to the president ways to increase the involvement of students in the Board's activities.

Antecedents to the Brouder study include the Report of the Commission on Tests (1970), which urged greater symmetry between institutions and students in the Board's focus of services; and the Committee on College Board Mission and Accountability (1977), which advised us to "search for ways to expand meaningful student participation in the affairs of the organization." The work of the aforementioned CSS Student Committee over the past four years has served as an excellent example of fruitful involvement of students in one aspect of the Board's work.

Ms. Brouder's report, in my judgment, is a reasoned, coherent, and challenging document, deserving the respectful attention of the membership. It is not a revolutionary statement, nor does it propose instant radical changes. Indeed, a number of the report's recommendations acknowledge the student involvement that already takes place and urges more effort in the same directions.

Having received the report in late February 1978, I transmitted it to the trustees at their March 30-31 meeting, calling attention to desirable steps that could be taken promptly in response to some of the recommendations.

Other steps, involving fundamental policy changes, obviously must await deliberation with committees, councils, and the membership. Among the steps endorsed by the trustees for early implementation are the following:

1. Authorization of a part-time staff position, "planning officer, student affairs," with the balance of duties in student-related program operations.

2. Naming of a student affairs committee, to be made up of staff, one or more students, and a trustee.

3. Appointment by the chairman of the College Board of students to such committees and councils as he deems appropriate, for example each national program advisory council or committee during the next cycle of turnover.

4. Convening of student appointees serving Board activities as a group at least annually to advise the president and staff.

5. Designating additional research and development activities that are particularly responsive to students' needs and interests, as reflected by their participation in the Board's councils and committees.

6. Consideration by the Committee on Membership of policies and procedures that would facilitate the participation of student organizations in the College Board membership.

In addition to the above, the trustees endorsed increased effort in such present activities as (1) surveying students' interests and attitudes; (2) including student organizations on College Board mailing lists; (3) involving students as presenters and participants in regional and national forum programs.

Other recommendations of the report will be considered over time and will in several instances necessarily call for membership study and action. It is quite possible that next winter's regional assembly agenda should include this topic for discussion as well as guidance to the staff and trustees.

I commend the report to each member representative of the College Board. It deals with some basic philosophical propositions that will affect the Board's future and offers constructive ideas for courses of action that might be followed over time. You may expect to hear further reports on our continued attention to this topic. The trustees and staff will welcome your counsel, especially following your perusal of the pages that follow.

S. P. Marland, Jr.

Introduction

This report is submitted to the president of the College Board in fulfillment of an assignment assumed in December 1976 to recommend ways in which the organization could both involve students in its ongoing affairs and become more responsive to the needs and concerns of the students who use, pay for, and are affected by College Board programs and services. The findings and recommendations contained herein were developed after careful study of the Board's programs and services, governance and committee structures, finances and funding bases, relationship with the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and other organizations, national and regional forums, membership structure, and many of the other activities that contribute to the fulfillment of the College Board's mission. Important insights and understandings came from College Board officers and staff, membership representatives, and representatives of the organized student community. In particular, the assistance and support of the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Student Involvement contributed significantly to the accomplishment of this assignment.

The agenda for this study was broad, and included such questions as the following:

- How can the College Board become more accountable to the students (and parents or guardians of minor students) who participate in its programs and services?
- How can the College Board modify current programs - and develop new programs - to more directly meet the information and service needs of students and prospective students in transition from school to college, college to work, and work to college?

- How can the College Board most effectively involve students in its program planning and evaluation activities, its policy-making processes, and its forum functions?
- How can the College Board foster greater communication and understanding between itself and students, parents, and their respective organizations?
- Given its associational character, how can the College Board introduce a greater degree of symmetry between student interests and institutional interests in the conduct of its affairs?

This report offers some possible responses to these and other questions about the relationship between the College Board and students.

The report is divided into nine major sections. The first identifies the major themes that recur throughout the findings and recommendations. The recommendations themselves are presented in the following sections:

- Disposition of the Report
- Disclosure
- Programs
- Governance
- Communication
- Membership
- Forums
- Office of Student Affairs

Major Themes

SYMMETRY: THE VISION OF THE 60s

College Board programs and services have unquestionably benefited many students and prospective students and, in numerous instances, supported the goal of equalizing educational opportunity. The cooperative effort among institutions to establish and maintain the Admissions Testing Program, for instance, has meant that students usually must complete only one college entrance examination rather than separate tests for each of the institutions to which they apply. This is clearly beneficial to students who make multiple applications, as well as to students who want to demonstrate an aptitude for college-level work not otherwise apparent on their high school transcripts. Similarly, the financial aid services of the College Scholarship Service permit students to demonstrate eligibility for federal campus-based aid programs, institutional assistance, state aid (in many instances), and now the Basic Grants program through the completion of a single need analysis document.

The benefits derived by many students notwithstanding, the College Board provides services primarily to a clientele of schools, colleges, and agencies. Individual students may profit from participation in Board programs, but in the aggregate, the programs directly and primarily serve institutional needs, only meeting student needs indirectly and secondarily. The major thrust of Board programs and services has been to provide colleges with information - in comparable formats - about particular students, information that is used in selection and admissions, guidance and placement, awarding financial aid, and granting academic credit or advanced standing. This is not to

impugn the purposes or operations of these programs, but simply to describe the functions they serve.

Despite the fact that students need information about institutions and educational options in formats that make comparison easier, despite the fact that students and prospective students (and their families) need services in the transition from school to college, college to work, and work to college, a striking lack of symmetry exists in the Board's program offerings. Nor is there any compensatory symmetry in the governance of the organization to help make up for the fact that the individuals who pay for the services are not the primary beneficiaries of the programs.

Questions can legitimately be raised as to whether the Board has any responsibility for offering services directly to students and their families, irrespective of the revenues they currently contribute to the organization. At the same time, an equally legitimate question can be raised as to whether students and their families should be required to support services that benefit institutions and subsidize in the process a whole range of College Board activities beyond the service in which they are directly participating. Both are large questions, and should receive more serious consideration and debate within the organization than they currently do.

The fact is, however, that no immediate shift in the funding base from families to institutions is likely, and neither is an immediate addition of new, parallel student services probable. Striking the delicate balance envisioned by the Commission on Tests in 1970 - with all of the attendant governance modifications and program diversifications - would be an enormous challenge, even in the best of times. But in an era of declining enrollments, increasing costs, and diminishing public support for higher education in general, such a goal seems virtually unattainable. The College Board's controlling institutional interests, whose diverse - and sometimes conflicting - demands for service already exceed the organization's capacity to respond in full, are not likely to willingly relinquish a very large share of the resources they govern or the influence they wield, and certainly not in the proportions that would be required to achieve true symmetry between institutions and students. Nonetheless, it is incumbent on the College Board to begin taking such steps as are feasible toward righting the balance in both its program offerings and the governance of its resources. Several of my

recommendations relate to the pursuit of such an objective.

ACCOUNTABILITY: THE IMPERATIVE OF THE 70s

The vision of symmetry is a relatively old one, dating back to the late 1960s and the College Board's Commission on Tests. As a long-term corporate goal, symmetry continues to hold considerable philosophical promise, although very little real progress has been made toward achieving it, and current limitations on its pursuit, as cited above, are real and constricting. A more pressing concern in the 1970s relates to accountability, and the College Board is, in my view, more immediately vulnerable on this front. Many of my recommendations are grounded in a concern about accountability to students who use College Board programs and services - a concern I would press even if students and parents did not provide more than 80 percent of the Board's revenues annually, but one that takes on extreme urgency in light of that contribution.

The College Board is, of course, accountable for the effective stewardship of its resources to a number of authorities and interest groups, as the Committee on Mission and Accountability recently pointed out: the New York Board of Regents (its chartering agent); the Internal Revenue Service (from whom it derives its nonprofit tax status); the institutions and agencies that make up its membership; and the students and prospective students who participate in Board programs and services. How the Board chooses to make itself accountable, and in what degrees, is what is at issue.

The membership has many opportunities to hold the Board accountable for its corporate actions, and misses no opportunity to do so. The Board is accountable under law to its chartering agent and various governmental agencies like the IRS. However, no mechanisms currently exist by which students and their families can call the Board to account. Most of them are not even in a position to refuse to use Board services, the ultimate weapon to which consumers of most other products and services can resort. Stephen Brill made the following critical statement about college entrance examinations in New York Magazine: "If we regulate a local utility because people have no choice but to buy its product, it seems incredible that we don't regulate this consumer product that has millions of involuntary customers and far greater consequences than a telephone or electric bill." This statement

need not be applied to the College Board in a wholesale fashion if the Board recognizes and responds voluntarily to the thrust of the growing consumer movement.

Many of my recommendations would, if implemented, support the Board in its efforts to become increasingly and visibly accountable to the students who participate in its programs and services. At the outset it is important to correct a misconception about the consumer movement, particularly as it relates to postsecondary education. The recent report of the Committee on Mission and Accountability noted that some members had expressed a concern that ". . . Board resources could be wasted in attempts to accommodate short-term changes in educational and political mood and fashion." College Board resources spent to respond to growing consumer interest would not be wasted. Interest in consumerism will not simply fade, although because it is a relatively new and developing movement, it likely will experience many changes in the next few years.

Consumerism is not a student movement - it did not originate on campuses or in relation to education, and in fact has been transplanted to that arena only fairly recently. But for once, the rationale and tactics being used by student groups to confront their institutions and allied associations (like the College Board) are in sync with the rationale and tactics being used by many other interest groups to organize around many other issues. A recent Lou Harris survey revealed that 77 percent of the public believed that all large companies should be required to employ a senior officer with specific responsibility for consumer affairs. (The Board does not currently designate such specific responsibilities to any individual or office within the corporation.) Sixty-five percent of the public believe that all large companies should be required to have a public or consumer representative on their boards of directors. (The College Board does not currently have such a representative on its Board of Trustees.) And an overwhelming majority believe consumerism as a political movement has brought real benefits to the consumer, and has not yet reached its peak of power.

The growth of the consumer movement has been paralleled by other movements aimed at imposing greater accountability on a variety of public and private institutions, as well as government at all levels. Among organized student groups at the postsecondary level, the consumer approach to educational

change has been fueled by the recognition that students sometimes have more success persuading their state and federal governments to take action on their behalf than they have persuading their own institutions, or organizations - like the College Board - that serve them.

An exclusive reliance on federal regulation will not ultimately serve either students or their institutions well. By virtue of its long history as a unique voluntary association, the College Board is in a position to counter this tendency toward sole reliance on governmental regulation with voluntary, cooperative efforts. The Board's Statement of Corporate Goals notes that ". . . consumer interests, reinforced by law and the courts, will impinge upon testing and financial aid services generally, and possibly beneficially." Whether the result is indeed beneficial will depend in large part on two factors: how responsive the Board can become to this large and increasingly well-organized constituency that has heretofore had neither input to its policy-making nor appeal from its actions; and how astute the Board can be in interpreting emerging student concerns.

Disposition of This Report

Many of the proposals contained in this report would, if implemented, have a significant impact on the College Board at all levels. The College Board should therefore take early action to ensure that these findings and recommendations are discussed widely by the membership and by appropriate student and consumer organizations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The College Board should issue this report in some form, however modest, so that it can be reviewed and discussed by the membership and appropriate student and consumer organizations.

2. The president of the College Board should be prepared to issue an acknowledgment and some preliminary response at the earliest possible opportunity.

3. The College Board should establish an ad hoc advisory panel, including representatives of the membership, the student community, and appropriate staff, to act as a follow-through task force.

Disclosure

Accountability requires that all policies and practices bearing directly on student participants in College Board programs and services be fully and accurately disclosed to students (and the parents and guardians of minor students). Of the Board's commitment in principle to such disclosures there is no doubt. In practice, however, there currently exists no uniform policy, spanning all programs in regard to the form, content, or timing of such disclosures. Such policies should be developed and procedures devised to bring all programs and services into compliance at the earliest possible opportunity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The College Board should disclose to all persons who take its tests, submit data for use by the College Board or distribution to others, or participate in research and development projects, at least the following information:

- the identity and responsibility of the College Board as sponsor;
- the nature of the product, service, or research by which they are affected;
- the use to which the product, service, or research will likely be put by others, such as educational institutions;
- the applicable refund policies;
- the fact that a portion of program fees supports other College Board activities and programs;
- the procedures used to maintain standards of validity, fairness, and

appropriateness in the construction, administration, reporting, interpretation, and evaluation of tests, need analysis methods, and other assessment measures; and

- the conditions surrounding the confidentiality and release of test scores or other personally identifiable information.

Such information should be disclosed to students at the point of purchase or application and reinforced on delivery of the product or service.

2. Channels should be developed, where they do not already exist, for the address of comments and criticisms directly to the College Board about its programs and services, and for the response thereto. Information about these procedures should be incorporated into all information bulletins and output documents or accompanying interpretive materials.

3. As a general practice the College Board should specifically inform students of all personally identifiable information transmitted about them to institutions when such information has been either directly reported by students to the College Board or derived from data provided by students to the College Board. (An obvious example is the CSS preliminary estimate of expected family contribution, a figure derived from data reported on the Financial Aid Form and transmitted to colleges and agencies for their use in awarding financial aid.) Optimally such information should be routinely reported back to students on a universal, no-fee basis. Where this is not feasible, any individual should be able, on provision of appropriate identifying information and a reasonable fee, to request such information about herself or himself directly from the College Board.

4. The College Board should specifically inform students of the appropriate uses and potential abuses of test scores. Students should also be informed of the procedures that have been established to investigate and resolve complaints of, or information about, questionable interpretation or use of test scores.

5. The College Board should, at the earliest possible opportunity, involve students in a review of current procedures for handling questions of score authenticity (for example, suspected or alleged cheating) arising in connection with the administration of College Board tests. The purpose of such a review should be to assure that these procedures are as nearly equitable and fair as possible, and fully disclosed to students prior to taking an examination.

Programs

The College Board has always sought to maintain high standards of quality, validity, and fairness in its program and service offerings in recognition of their potential impact on the institutions that use them and the students or prospective students whose educational aspirations are so greatly affected by them. The Board annually involves hundreds of professionals from the teaching, admissions, guidance and counseling, and financial aid communities in the development and review of its program offerings to ensure their quality and appropriateness. Accountability also requires, however, a greater degree of investigation into the usefulness, clarity, and meaningfulness of those services as perceived by students than is currently practiced by the organization. Many of the following recommendations propose actions that have been undertaken by program staff in various areas from time to time. The intent of including such recommendations is not to suggest that the Board has no concern about this particular dimension of program quality (for it has), or that the Board has never attempted to evaluate its services from this standpoint (for it has, with varying degrees of success in different areas). Rather, the intent is to emphasize the need for establishing uniform policies and practices on this point with regard to the timing, the content, the form, and the anticipated outcomes of such activities.

Other recommendations in this section relate more to symmetry than to accountability, particularly those that deal with the question of developing services intended for direct use by students and their families.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All College Board programs and services that interact directly with a student population should be regularly studied in an effort to identify possible modifications that would benefit students.

- Each ongoing program or service that deals directly with a student population should sample student opinion about that program or service at least once every two years, by means of questionnaires or other appropriate methods.

- All information bulletins, collection documents, output documents, interpretive materials, and any other publications or materials intended for a student audience should be reviewed in depth for clarity, usefulness, style of presentation, and scope of contents at least once in every two to three years.

- Special studies of College Board programs that affect the student population but are primarily intended to benefit institutions (as in the need analysis and testing areas) should be conducted at least once in every three years. The purpose of such studies should be to determine whether there are modifications that could be made in the administration or reporting of results that would be of more direct and immediate benefit to students.

Students should be deliberately and systematically involved in these and related activities.

2. Special problems and unique opportunities are posed by the development of services intended for use directly by students rather than institutions (such as the Early Financial Aid Planning Service). Students should therefore be intimately involved in all stages of problem identification, program development, design, and implementation, and in evaluation of both formative and summative varieties.

3. In line with the foregoing recommendation, such direct-to-student services should be specifically included in the charge to student affairs committees in the appropriate divisions, much as the Council on Entrance Services is charged with a particular responsibility for overseeing the Admissions Testing Program, or the Council on Access Services with periodic reviews of the Career Skills Assessment Program. As an immediate step, the charge to the CSS Student Committee should be rewritten to include the responsibility for periodically reviewing the Early Financial Aid Planning

Service and the College Scholarship Information Bank.

4. A significant portion of the College Board's research and development budget should be devoted to identifying and meeting students' information and service needs, through direct or indirect means. Research and development efforts aimed at improving institutional services are valid and necessary, but work in the area of meeting student needs should be given equal priority and allocated equal resources. Students should be deliberately involved in identifying research priorities and developing research designs. In addition, the College Board should create a "small grants" program to support student-initiated research and development in these and other areas related to the Board's mission.

5. Special studies of all Board program and service offerings, including those whose primary beneficiaries are institutions rather than students (for example, in the testing or need analysis areas), should be conducted every two or three years. The purpose of such studies should be to determine whether there are ways to modify programs to more directly meet students' information needs. (Program staff should obviously be involved in such a review and analysis of their respective services, but personnel not directly involved in the conduct of each particular service should also participate in this review.)

6. Where the College Board is not itself in a position to respond programmatically to student needs, it should actively encourage other organizations, institutions, and agencies to undertake such efforts. For instance, the Board should continue to exercise the strong leadership it displayed in its work with the National Task Force on Better Information for Student Choice, particularly with regard to encouraging postsecondary institutions to provide certain types of information in comparable formats to prospective students. The Board should also lend its support to developmental efforts by other organizations, including student groups, in the form of technical assistance, funds for research, consultation on proposal preparation, and the like.

7. The College Board should increase its efforts to provide information directly to students and their families that will assist them in making postsecondary choices. College Times, for instance, should be formally established as an annual or biannual publication of the College Board, and an

expansion of its current circulation sought. Students and parents should be involved in the development and evaluation of any such future efforts. Similarly the College Board should actively involve students in developing the programs and materials used in training professional personnel who have responsibilities for meeting the information and service needs of students and their families (for example, financial aid administrators, high school counselors).

8. In the interest of symmetry, the College Board should continue its efforts to encourage and assist test and test score users (institutions and agencies) in their validation efforts. In addition, the Board should vigorously encourage user institutions to clearly and specifically disclose the uses to which test scores are put in their bulletins, catalogs, or other materials provided to prospective applicants.

9. Similarly the College Scholarship Service should continue to encourage and assist need analysis service users in validating their respective student expense budgets - the "other half" of the financial aid equation. Also, the CSS should continue to provide the leadership, evidenced in Making It Count, to postsecondary institutions in disclosing information about costs and financial aid in ways that permit prospective applicants to estimate their probable eligibility for assistance.

Governance

Ultimate authority over College Board affairs rests with the membership, although the corporation is in practice managed by an elected Board of Trustees and appointed officers. The bylaws also provide for a series of committees and councils, made up of membership representatives, that review and advise the trustees on various aspects of the College Board's affairs. Each regional assembly has, in addition, a complex of divisions and committees that plays a critical role in the overall governance of the College Board. Much of the organization's vitality is directly attributable to the talent and commitment of the persons who function in various capacities within the committee and governance structures.

One of the most visible and productive means of involving students and parents in College Board activities would be to identify and attract able representatives of these constituencies into the committee and governance structures.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Student affairs advisory panels, consisting primarily of students but including as well one or two representatives from parents or citizens organizations, should be created in the programs and public affairs divisions. These advisory committees, like the CSS Student Committee upon which they would be patterned, should be integrated into the larger committee structure of the College Board. The CSS Student Committee should be sustained.

2. Student representatives should be added to all of the ongoing committees and councils at the national level, in appropriate and feasible num-

bers, but never less than two such representatives per committee or council.

3. From the members of the student affairs panels in CSS, programs, and public affairs, as well as all ongoing councils and committees, an advisory panel to the president and trustees should be created. Such a panel should be charged with examining the broader policy issues that span programs and touch the entire corporation. This panel would meet as needed with such groups or persons as designated by the president of the College Board, for an exchange of views, advice on policies and practices, and so forth.

4. Regional office personnel should be encouraged to work with their respective membership assemblies to develop local plans for student involvement. The New York office of the College Board should provide such assisance and support, including contacts with area student organizations, as would be required by each region to devise and implement their plans.

5. Several student representatives should be seated on the Board of Trustees as full voting members at the earliest possible opportunity.

Communication

At the present time virtually no channels of communication exist between the College Board and organizations of students and parents, an important prerequisite for involving students and parents in Board affairs. Deliberately fostering such communication would enable staff to more accurately assess and interpret the emerging concerns and interests of such organizations, and would as well make manifest the Board's increasing sense of accountability to individuals who use, pay for, and are affected by its programs and services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The College Board should routinely send College Board News, College Board Review, publications lists, and other appropriate materials to major state and national organizations of students, parents, and consumer activists concerned about education.

2. College Board staff should be assigned liaison functions with such organizations, and in particular, attend and observe their meetings where possible.

3. The College Board should seek opportunities and mechanisms to engage students and student organizations in dialogue about their information and service needs. Where appropriate, new forums could be organized on an occasional basis to deal with particular concerns. A useful model can be found in the Student-Commissioner Conference, held in Washington, D.C. in December 1977. This event, organized by the National Student Educational Fund under contract to the United States Office of Education, brought to-

gether about 60 student representatives from all over the country with the Commissioner of Education and senior USOE staff for a two-day conference on student concerns, primarily in the financial aid area.

4. The College Board should increase its efforts to communicate directly with student populations through students' own media. In fall 1977 the public affairs division sent press releases to high school student newspapers on College Board programs and activities, for example. Similar communications efforts, targeted at college student press, student government associations, state and national student organizations, and so forth should be initiated. A monthly or bimonthly newsletter to high school and college press and to state and national organizations, would be a good way of accomplishing this general objective.

5. The College Board should create opportunities for students to explore in depth particular aspects of programs and services and to communicate their findings to their peers without editorial interference. For instance, several high school students could be invited to observe a faculty-teacher grading session in the Advanced Placement Program and write an account of their experiences and impressions for circulation through such means as described in the foregoing recommendation. Similarly, the recommendation of the ETS Task Force on Student Relations regarding student involvement in test development activities could be implemented by the Board, with an opportunity provided for participants to explain how the process works to their peers. These activities would help assure students that the College Board is not only concerned about the fairness of its programs and their impact on students, but open to public scrutiny and review.

Membership

The membership of the College Board now totals more than 2,400 postsecondary institutions, secondary schools, school systems, and educational associations. The Committee on Mission and Accountability found strong support among the membership for the current policy that provides for institutional, rather than individual, membership in the College Board. Acknowledging this sentiment, and recognizing that the institutions now controlling the organization are not likely to be receptive to more radical proposals (such as the creation of a new parallel membership organization under the Board's auspices, as envisioned by the Commission on Tests), the College Board's associational character must be accepted as a given. However, there are many organizations of students and parents that are potentially eligible for membership in the College Board under the current criteria for educational associations. Attracting some of these associations into full membership in the College Board is an appropriate method of increasing student involvement in the affairs of the organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The College Board should directly invite major state and national organizations of students and parents to apply for membership. Direct invitations would be a necessity, at least initially, since most such organizations do not normally receive College Board publications or have professional associates who would make them aware of their potential eligibility.

2. The College Board should ease the financial burdens of membership (for example, by waiving or reducing membership and registration fees) in recog-

nition of two important facts: (1) most such organizations operate on shoestring budgets at best, and (2) these organizations represent constituents who pay for College Board services and provide the lion's share of the Board's overall revenues.

Forums

One of the College Board's chief organizational strengths lies in its various forum functions. As the Committee on Mission and Accountability noted: ". . . the Board's national and regional forums are regarded as critically important as a unique democratic mechanism through which American schools and colleges can exchange ideas, solve problems cooperatively, and implement standards of educational quality, student financial need, and ethical behavior - without reliance upon governmental intervention."

Therefore, the College Board should actively seek to engage student and parent associations in the organization's various forum functions. The continued health and vigor of the Board's forums require that all points of view, including both student and institutional, be represented and debated. This is not intended to suggest that institutional personnel are not deeply concerned about students' welfare, or that the viewpoints of institutional representatives and student representatives never coincide, but simply that students should be accorded the opportunity to present their own interests in dialogue and debate. The principle has been neatly summarized in the slogan of the National Student Lobby: "For years other people have been speaking for students. Now students are speaking for themselves."

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The College Board should announce its regional and national forums in publications and media that are likely to reach students and student organizations. Such announcements should include specific statements of the time, place, and subject matter of significant actions that will be taken by

the membership of the College Board relating to the interests of students.

2. The College Board should encourage its member institutions to include one or more students in their delegations to national and regional forums, and provide some incentive or assistance to institutions that choose to comply (for example, a reduced registration fee for a student who accompanies an institutional representative).

3. Where feasible and appropriate, the College Board should involve students in planning forum activities and engage them as panelists or resource people (as has been done in a few instances already).

4. The College Board should routinely extend formal invitations to its annual meetings to major national student and parent organizations. Similar invitations should be extended to the appropriate state organizations in the host state. Invitations to regional meetings also should be routinely extended to the appropriate state associations in each region.

5. The College Board should ease the financial burden on student registrants at annual and regional meetings by reducing fees, providing for group accommodations, and the like.

6. The College Board should invite all student and parent participants in councils and committees to attend the annual meeting and/or appropriate regional meetings on an expenses-paid basis, since these participants are not likely to have access to institutional travel budgets.

Office of Student Affairs

All of the foregoing recommendations constitute a large agenda indeed. No more than a fraction of them could be adequately managed with the current staff configuration and level. This is most emphatically not intended as a criticism of College Board staff, many of whom are deeply committed to meeting the information and service needs of students and their families. It is an observation about work loads, which are already heavy. In any case, personnel whose primary professional responsibilities lie in servicing institutional clients cannot - and should not - be expected to adequately represent, protect, and advance the interests of students as well, for the simple reason that the two are not always compatible.

The absence of an in-house student advocate or advocates is, in fact, one of the rather more obvious gaps in the College Board's organizational structure, as is the lack of a central office or ombudsman charged with the responsibility for responding to the numerous inquiries and requests for help from students and their families who need information and assistance in the school-to-college transition. The functions that such persons might perform are, at the present time, either dispersed throughout the organization or not performed at all (or in a sporadic manner at best). Important kinds of information, understandings, insights, and skills are thus often lost to the organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The College Board should establish, at the earliest possible opportunity, an office of student affairs. To such an office should be assigned

the responsibility for implementing many of the recommendations outlined in this report. With adequate staffing, such an office would provide assistance to program officers in carrying out some of the occasional projects recommended in this report, such as surveying student opinion or revising program materials. The availability of such assistance would obviate the necessity of duplicative (and more costly) staffing in every division to meet such periodic demands. In addition, such an office would serve to centralize some of the functions required to fulfill other recommendations that are time-consuming and best handled in a centralized fashion, such as the identification and preliminary screening of candidates for committee positions.

2. The office of student affairs should also function as an ombudsman. The College Board receives numerous inquiries, in the form of letters, telephone calls, and walk-in visitors, about various aspects of college planning, not all of them directly related to the operation of specific College Board programs. There does not now exist any systematic way of either handling or analyzing these requests. Such inquiries should be regularly analyzed for implications regarding the information and service needs of students and their families, and such analyses communicated to the appropriate program officers. Time constraints may dictate that the Board is forced to respond in a routine fashion to most requests, with form letters, Meeting College Costs, or other publications. However, a more careful logging and analysis of inquiries would give the Board insight into emerging needs and improve the quality of short-term responses to those needs.

3. The office of student affairs should also be charged with the responsibility for interpreting emerging consumer concerns to the management and trustees of the College Board, as well as for performing liaison functions between the Board and student and parent organizations, for which there is no current provision.

Conclusion

Implementation of the recommendations offered here would, in my judgment, go a long way toward increasing the College Board's accountability to students and their families, as well as toward righting the balance in the organization's program offerings, governance, and forum activities.

Given the breadth of the agenda for this study, however, these should be viewed as only partial responses. The search for answers to the important but troublesome questions of public accountability and responsiveness to student needs should not come to an end with the issuance of this report. On the contrary, this report should be considered as only the beginning of an activity that should be integrated with the many other kinds of planning that make up the College Board's organizational agenda as it moves into the 1980s. The uncertainty, stresses, and challenges that confront the entire postsecondary enterprise affect the College Board as well. The organization cannot afford to remain static on any front, least of all in relation to such issues as public accountability and consumer responsiveness. Thus it is my hope - indeed, my recommendation - that although this report may mark the end of my assignment, it will signal the start of a new and much larger assignment undertaken by the College Board as a whole.